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U.S. paints networks into corner on national interest

Evidence is mounting that the Reagan administration, having extracted an apology from ABC News last February for an appearance by Soviet commentator Vladimir Posner following a presidential address on defense, is flush with that success. The specter of criminal charges being filed against NBC News by the Justice Department at the request of CIA director William Casey for the network's alleged violations of federal laws governing American intelligence gathering comes on the heels of the network's questionable decision to make a deal with Palestinian Abu Abbas.

Two weeks ago, Casey likewise threatened the Washington Post—prior to publication—with a day in court if it printed similar material. And in an incident that drew less attention, the State Department has reserved the right to revoke permission to the Cable News Network to tap into Soviet television news feeds from a Russian satellite.

CNN was granted a temporary license by the Federal Communications Commission, but the administration has said it would deny access if it deemed the satellite exchange, which is not imminent, "inconsistent with the national interest."

Apparently, that interest can mean too much of anything Soviet in nature. A spokesman for the State Department told



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the Columbia Journalism Review that Ronald Reagan's displeasure with "the balance of information" during the Geneva summit last year played a role in the implementation of conditions for CNN.



CIA director William Casey spurred criminal charges against NBC News.